

COMICS

MARMADUKE



HERMAN



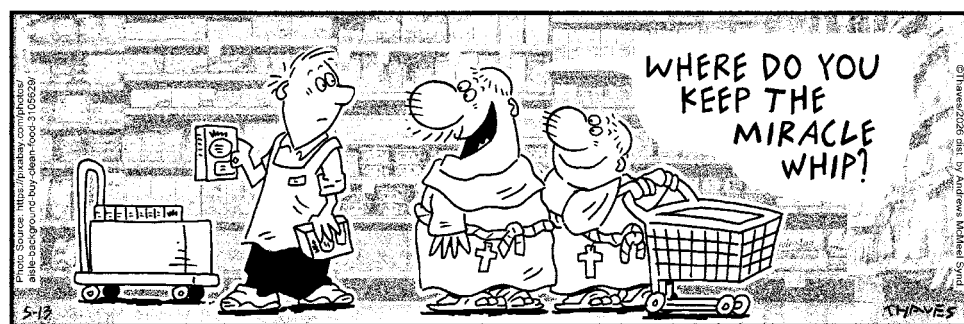
REALITY CHECK



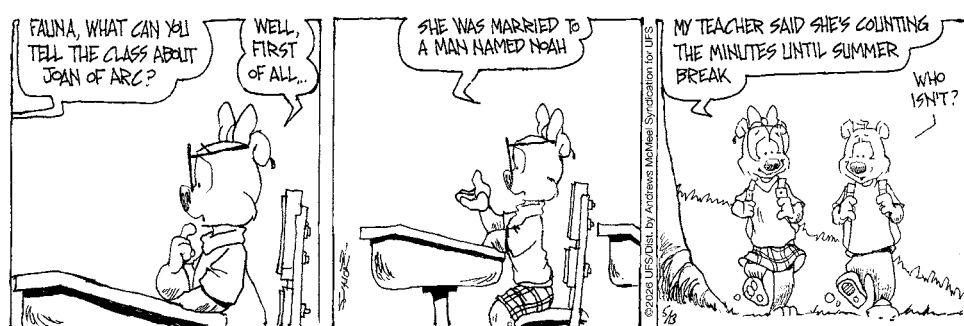
MODERATELY CONFUSED



FRANK & ERNEST



THE GRIZZLELLS



PICKLES



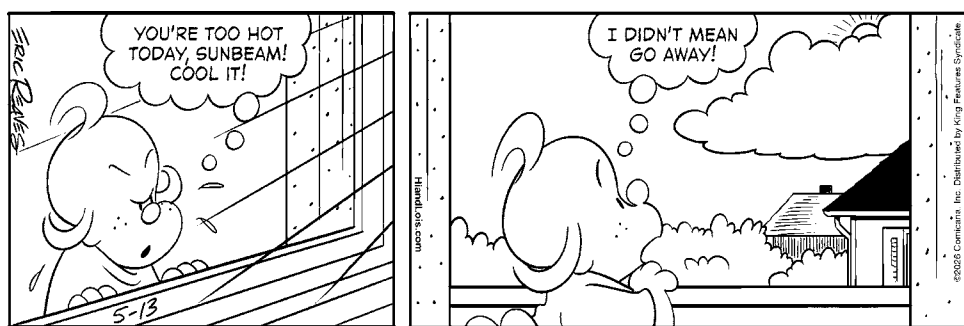
BLONDIE



BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



A 44-Year Friendship at Risk Over \$4



ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie

Dear Annie: I have had a close friend for 44 years. We have been through marriages, children, illnesses, holidays, losses and all the ordinary ups and downs that come with a friendship that lasts nearly half a century. That is why something very small has hurt me more than I expected.

Recently, I was very ill for three weeks with vomiting, then bronchitis, and I ended up in the hospital over Easter. Because I was still recovering, I asked this longtime friend if she would pick up a box of tea for me. It cost \$4.

A few days later, we met at bingo, and she brought me the tea. I thought I had smaller bills, but when I looked in my purse, I only had two \$20 bills. I got up to go to the canteen to make change, but another friend offered to break a \$20 for me.

As soon as I sat back down, my friend leaned over and said, “Did you get the change for the \$4?” It wasn’t just the words. It was the tone and the look on her face. It felt as if she thought I might not pay her back.

I was stunned. In 44 years,

I have never failed to repay her or anyone else. I am not someone who “forgets” debts, even tiny ones. I was also feeling fragile after being so sick, which may be why this hit me so hard. Still, I cannot shake the feeling that she doubted my character over \$4.

I paid her, of course, but now I feel awkward and hurt. Part of me thinks I should let it go because it was only \$4. Another part of me feels that after 44 years of friendship, she should know me better.

How do I process this without turning a small moment into a big fight? Should I say something, or should I chalk it up to a bad tone, a bad day and a very unfortunate cup of tea? -- Steeped in Hurt

Dear Steeped in Hurt: After 44 years, one awkward sentence should not be allowed to burn down the whole teahouse.

You were sick, tired and tender, so her tone landed hard. She may have been rude, or she may simply have been focused on the money in an ungraceful moment.

Say gently, “I know it was only \$4, but the way you asked made me feel like you didn’t trust me. That hurt.” Then stop talking and let her answer.

Long friendships survive little bruises when both people are brave enough to name them and kind enough not to enlarge them.

“Out of Bounds: Estrangement, Boundaries and the Search for Forgiveness” is out now! Annie Lane’s third anthology is for anyone who has lived with anger, estrangement or the deep ache of being wronged -- because forgiveness isn’t for them. It’s for you. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

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ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Happy Birthday: Look for opportunities; they will sprout. A lifestyle change will have a greater impact on you than you expect. Do the groundwork, fill out applications, talk to experts and put your budget and plan in place. This is a year of quiet change.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Stick to the path of least resistance. Use your experience and knowledge to press forward with insight and a backup plan if necessary. Welcome positive input.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- You can make a difference if you reach out, help someone in need or redirect your energy into volunteer work that melts your heart. How you spend your time will map out how you feel about yourself.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Be bold, aggressive and thoughtful when dealing with others, and you will have a positive impact on how situations unfold. Channeling your energy into being the best version of yourself will make you feel good.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Listen, learn, take notes and use the information you gather to elaborate on something you want to pursue. Actions speak louder than words and are more difficult for others to manipulate.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Whether you are looking to enhance your skills, knowledge, experience or lifestyle, putting a plan in place that’s doable will give you the strength and confidence to proceed.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- Sign up for something that will raise your awareness and give you something to consider that will encourage a

positive lifestyle change. A motion or signal someone offers will resonate with you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Hang on tight and move like the wind. Explore what’s available to you and how you can incorporate your dreams into an opportunity that may seem far-fetched to others but resonates with you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Stick close to home. Give yourself a chance to digest what’s happening around you and find a place where you fit in and can apply what you do best to bring about positive change.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Hold tight. Now isn’t the time to make waves. Observation is your friend and will help you dissect what you are up against and how to deliver the best option or outlet for change.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Money matters, and putting a budget in place before starting something will ease stress and keep you on track with your plans. Talk to experts and get second opinions.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Financial discussions will help you decide what you can afford. Work with the numbers, manage your money and search for alternative means and methods to create the lifestyle you desire.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Get moving. Exercise, conversations and being part of where the action is will elevate your creative imagination, giving way to something that excites you. Refuse to let what others say influence you.

- ACROSS**
- Drain the energy from
 - Rainy
 - Costly fur
 - Mongrel
 - Learning
 - Orchestra member
 - “Much — About Nothing”
 - Pod veggie
 - Fork part
 - Hourglass, e.g.
 - Selected
 - Bed and breakfast
 - “— I Met Your Mother”
 - Command
 - Open
 - Old flames
 - At any time
 - Black bird
 - Martini ingredient
 - Corner space in Monopoly
 - Remote button
 - Houston player
 - Restricted
 - High mountain
 - Boxing great
 - Supernatural being
 - Doggie
 - Actor — Alda
 - Like a missing GI
 - Vote against
 - Adore
 - Not plentiful
 - Psychic’s gift, for short
 - Watched
 - Drain cleaner
 - Poor grade
- DOWN**
- “Get lost!”

Answer to this puzzle

D	E	E		E	L		D	E	L	E
S	P	E		R	A	R		E	A	L
V	A	N		L	O	M		N	A	V
H	O	C		P	O		I	T	E	S
				I	L	V		L	A	P
D	E	L		M	I	L		O	R	S
E	T	U		M		T		I	V	J
I	N	P		R		E		E	S	E
A	V	A		C	N			E	A	S
				M	O	H			N	I
N	E	S		O	H			R	E	M
E	N	I		T				O	O	V
O	B	O						A	R	O
K	I	N		M				L	E	S

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11				12				13			
14				15				16			
17				18				19	20		
		21				22					
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31				32		33			34		
35				36				37			
38				39				40	41		
				42		43			44		
45	46	47						48		49	50
51				52	53	54			55		
56				57					58		
59				60					61		

- Leggy bird
- the wiser
- Sharp
- “— Doone”
- Most distant parts
- Time measure
- Large prefix
- Line of rotation
- Hot or cold drink
- Bad
- Warned
- Poker stake
- Mottled
- Football’s — Manning
- Shock
- Venus de —
- Came down in buckets
- Sap flavor
- Mother-of- —
- Auction
- Trick
- Positive review
- Instance
- Publicity
- Method
- State near Wash.